3.3. POVERTY

1994 has seen an exacerbation of the inequality represented within the province. Those who control trade (the merchants) and the fertile agricultural land (the zamindars) have enjoyed a good year. Their profits and yields have been some of the best in living memory. The poor have been less fortunate.

Much land is farmed on a share cropping basis. There are a number of ways in which share cropping contracts are set. Five factors of production are recognised: land, seed, farm power (ie oxen), water (only in the case of irrigated or abi land) and labour. The harvest is divided along the lines of who provided the factors of production. Typically a share cropper will provide labour , oxen and maybe seed. Therefore he will receive between 20 - 60 % of the harvest. The landowner will, obviously, always provide the land & water. He may also provide he farm power and seed. Thus a sharecropper providing just labour can receive little or in a bad year nothing for his labour.

In the opium producing areas of Badakhshan the poor also suffered badly. In Darayem valley the small farmers sold their opium resin forward during winter 1993/94 (ie before they had harvested). They received 20 000 Afs a pau (approximately half a kilo). The price for opium resin in spring 1994 was 100000 Afs per pau. The price of wheat had increased by three times. After much unrest in the area, the local authorities enforced a comprise where the price of opium sold on such a basis would be compensated at the rate of 60000 Afs per pau.

The population of the "hunger districts", those districts dependant on dry land farming, has suffered badly. The third successive bad harvest means that they have little return off their land. The price of lalmi land has dropped and it is now impossible to sell. Most families have sold off their other assets to buy wheat during the last three years. They have little left to sell apart from their animals. A visitor travelling to Ragh or Shar-i-Buzurg will come across a pitiful procession of animals in poor condition, being driven off to the lowlands for sale. Other lalami cash crops, such as liquorice root have been produced. However, with the routes to the markets (the south and India blocked) the real price has dropped from 2000 Afs per seer in 1992 to between 1500 Afs to 3000 Afs per seer in 1995.

Badakhshi have traditionally gone outside of their province for work. In the "hunger crescent"; Ragh, Shar-i-Buzurg, Shegnan, Wakhan, Eshkashem Kuran-o-Munjan and the upper ends of the Teskhan, Darayem, Argu & Keshem valleys, one or two men from each family have left the village each winter to work in the lowlands: Takhar, Kunduz and Baghlan (known in Badakhshan by the old name of Qataghan), Iran or Pakistan. Young men often leave for two or three years to work in Iran to earn their bride prices. In the autumn of 1994 in the districts of Ragh and Shar-i-Buzurg between 30 - 40 % of the families have left their homes due to hunger.

This is unprecedented. Some villages were almost deserted. In other districts, the proportions are slightly less.

Unfortunately the labour market is depressed: entry conditions have been tightened on the Iranian and Pakistani borders and the fighting around Kunduz has restricted the amount of work available in the lowlands. In Wakhan in January 1995, people were willing to work for 500 Afghanis per day: approximately 15 American cents.

3.4. PUBLIC SERVICES

Health: There are 12 Governmental Health Centres in Badakhshan: Fayzabad General Hospital, Argu BHU, Gulaki BHU, Shar-i-Buzurg BHU, Ragh BHU, Sheghnan Hospital, Eshkashem Hospital, Wakhan BHU, Zeebak BHU, Baharak Hospital, Jurm Hospital and Keshem Hospital. The hospitals have at least one MD doctor. The BHU are staffed by para-medics. Some of the health facilities are in purpose built building of various states of disrepair, others exist in borrowed rooms. Support is received from SCA, WHO, UNICEF. Orphans Relief Association (ORA) is running two de-toxification clinics: in Sheghan and Eshkashem. There are a number of private clinics in the province and private pharmacies in Keshem, Fayzabad, Gulaki, Bahark and Jurm. Medicine is imported from Pakistan and India. The majority of the population of the province lives more than one days travel from a health facility.

Education: The people of Badakhshan have a high interest in and respect for education. Levels of literacy are surprisingly high given the isolation and poverty of the province. In Sheghnan Centre there is about 80% literacy. The Program Director visited a school that was functioning in Baba Tangi in Upper Wakhan (ten days walk from the provincial capital). A network of over 200 primary, secondary and high schools is run by the provincial education department. Support to some schools is received from Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) in the form of salary subsidies, teacher training and text books. However, salaries are pitifully low and not paid regularly. In the past support was also received from University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). There are about 60 school buildings in good condition. Of these 32 have been reconstructed or repaired by NAC in the last two years. There are no vocational training or higher level educational establishments functioning in the province.

Non Governmental Agencies: A number of international and national non-governmental agencies work in Badakhshan. The United Nations Organisation is represented by five permanently staffed offices: the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the United Nations Coordination Office for Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan (UNOCHA). WFP is involved in a large number of food-aid projects using a variety

implementing mechanisms. UNDCP involved in funding a variety of projects aimed at reducing drug abuse and production. WHO and UNCIEF are involved in public health work and UNOCHA acts as the coordinating agency. Three Afghan Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO's) work in the Province: the Pamir Reconstruction Bureau (PRB), the Consultant Bureau for Reconstruction (CBR) and the Reconstruction Authority for Afghanistan (RAFA), these NGO's concentrate on the reconstruction sector. Four international NGO's currently work in the province: Afghanaid (in the sectors of reconstruction, agriculture and income generation), Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) (in the sectors of education, reconstruction and health), AVICEN (in the sector of vaccination) and Norwegian Afghanistan Committee.

3.5. LOGISTICS

Internal Communications:

Roads: The internal communication infrastructure of the province is poorly developed. The province is bisected by a motorable road running from Keshem through Fayzabad to Eshkashem (225 km or 20 hours by vehicle). This road then continues up the Wakhan and is currently motorable until 10 km above Qala Panja. This road is driveable year round, except after heavy rain or snow. However, in the spring it is frequently cut by floods and landslides. There are three motorable feeder roads joining this highway: Keshem Valley, Emgan Valley and Argu Valley. The rest of the province is serviced by foot tracks. Most of the foot tracks are suitable for donkey or mules. However, these tracks become impassable in the winter due to snow and mud.

Air transport: There were three pre-war airstrips in Badakhshan: Fayzabad, Kwakhan and Darwaz. Fayzabad airport was built by the Russians for all weather use: the runway is made up of interlinked corrugated steel sheet and is suitable for all weather use. There are no air traffic control facilities in operation. The airport is open and used regularly by UN and Government aircraft. The operational status of Kwakhan and Darwaz is unclear. Reports indicate that both runways are intact, but neither has been recently used. There are a number of heli-ports laid out by the Russians for military use at the following locations: Keshem, Skaazer, Topkhana and Sarhad.

Telecommunications: There is a functioning telephone system in Fayzabad and a line between Eshkashem and Sarhad in Wakhan. The rest of the system was destroyed in the war. Radio links to Peshawar and other locations are available in Fayzabad.

External communications:

West: The main road enters the province at Keshem. This is an extension of the Kunduz - Taloqan highway. This road is currently blocked at Kunduz. However, materials have been coming from Mazar-i-Sharif through Qala Qissar. Materials have come from Central Asia across the Amu Darya, on boats, at Sher Khan Bandar.

North & North-East: There are functioning motorised cable ways across the Darya Panja to Tajikistan at Kwakhan and Darwaz. Small amounts of material are brought across the Panja at Shegnan on inflated inner tubes. There are motorable Russian military Bailey-type bridges at Eshkashem. At Ab Gach / Langar in Wakhan there is a similar bridge crossing the Panja but the deck has been removed. The upper reaches of the Darya Panja freeze in the winter and it is possible to move material across the ice*. The Tajikistan Border is currently patrolled by Russian and Uzbek soldiers.

South & South-East: There are footpaths leading south from Kuran-o-Munjan and Skazer to the **Panjsher valley** and Nuristan (these were used by the Mujehadeen to supply Badakhshan and the north of Afghanistan: it took three weeks to reach Keshim from Chitral via Nuristan during the early years of the Russian Occupation). There is a road over the Dorah Pass (4500m) which is sometimes driveable (August - early November), however this depends annually on the snow being cleared and the road in Sanglich valley being repaired. Between Dorah Kotal and the Chinese border there are seven foot passes into Pakistan. Six are difficult and only open in the summer: they are not possible for horses or donkeys. The Boroghil Pass in Wakhan is a relatively low pass (3600m) which is usually open in the winter. Access to China is through the Pamirs and across the Chaqomatin Pass.

Storage:

Fayzabad: The Government, WFP, NAC and Afghanaid have weather proof storage capacity. Total available storage is probably around 2500 mt of wheat.
Keshem: NAC has a weatherproof "hard storage capacity of around 400 mt of wheat. The Government go-down has been destroyed, but there is still a frame and concrete base.
Baharak: WFP has a storage facility.
Eshkashem: WFP has three Rubb-halls (semi-permanent plastic tents) on an island in the middle of the river. Estimated storage capacity is about 500 mt in each tent. Total 1500mt.
Ab Gach, Wakhan: There is a UNOCHA Rubb-Hall near the bridge. Several holes have been cut in the sides, but the facility is still serviceable. Estimated storage capacity: 500mt.
There are other storage possibilities in the bazaars, but these all entail renting private houses.

Transportation:
There are transport contractors using a variety of Russian trucks in all the major bazaars. These contractors are generally reliable, although their trucks can be less so. Fuel is usually available, but expensive. When one moves off the main roads, commodities must be transported by horse or donkey. In a few cases porters must be used. This is expensive, but possible. It requires good organisation and control. NAC has found it possible to construct schools, requiring upto 40 mt of cement, glass, paint and galvanised iron sheet, four days travel from road heads. The best time for transportation is an annual "transportation window" from August through to mid-November, when weather conditions are dry and stable.

5.0. IMPLICATIONS & CRITERION FOR AN INTERVENTION

The conditions within the province have deteriorated over the last three years. The result is not a vicious circle of poverty, but rather a vicious downward spiral of poverty, environmental degradation and despair. There has been little snow in the mountains during the winter of 1994 / 95. This does not bode well for the 1995 harvest. There will be floods, landslides, earthquakes and other natural catastrophes in the spring. These will hit a population, which has become increasing vulnerable and unable to cope. The result will be islands of disaster in an ocean of hunger & poverty. The situation may or may not meet text book definitions of famine, but there will be immense hardship. The spiral will descend one more loop. Larger numbers of people will leave the province and a greater proportion of the population will sink into even more abject conditions of life. Unless an intervention is made this will continue until enough people have left the province, the demands placed on the Province's natural resource base become sustainable and a Malthusian balance has been reached.

Previous interventions in the Province have often been unplanned and un-coordinated. Usually they have failed to focus on the core issue of food security & production. The coping mechanisms of the Badakhshi to their perennial problems have been undermined rather than re-enforced. For example well intentioned emergency relief efforts have come months too late and failed to reach target groups.

Any intervention should aim to cure the sickness, rather than treat the symptom.

> **"Do not give a hungry person a fish to eat. Give him a line, teach him how to fish and he will never be hungry."**

The focus should be on stabilising and increasing food production and improving communications. It should be well planned and re-enforce rather than undermine the ways that the Badakhshi of developed of dealing with their problems. The solution lies with development rather than relief.

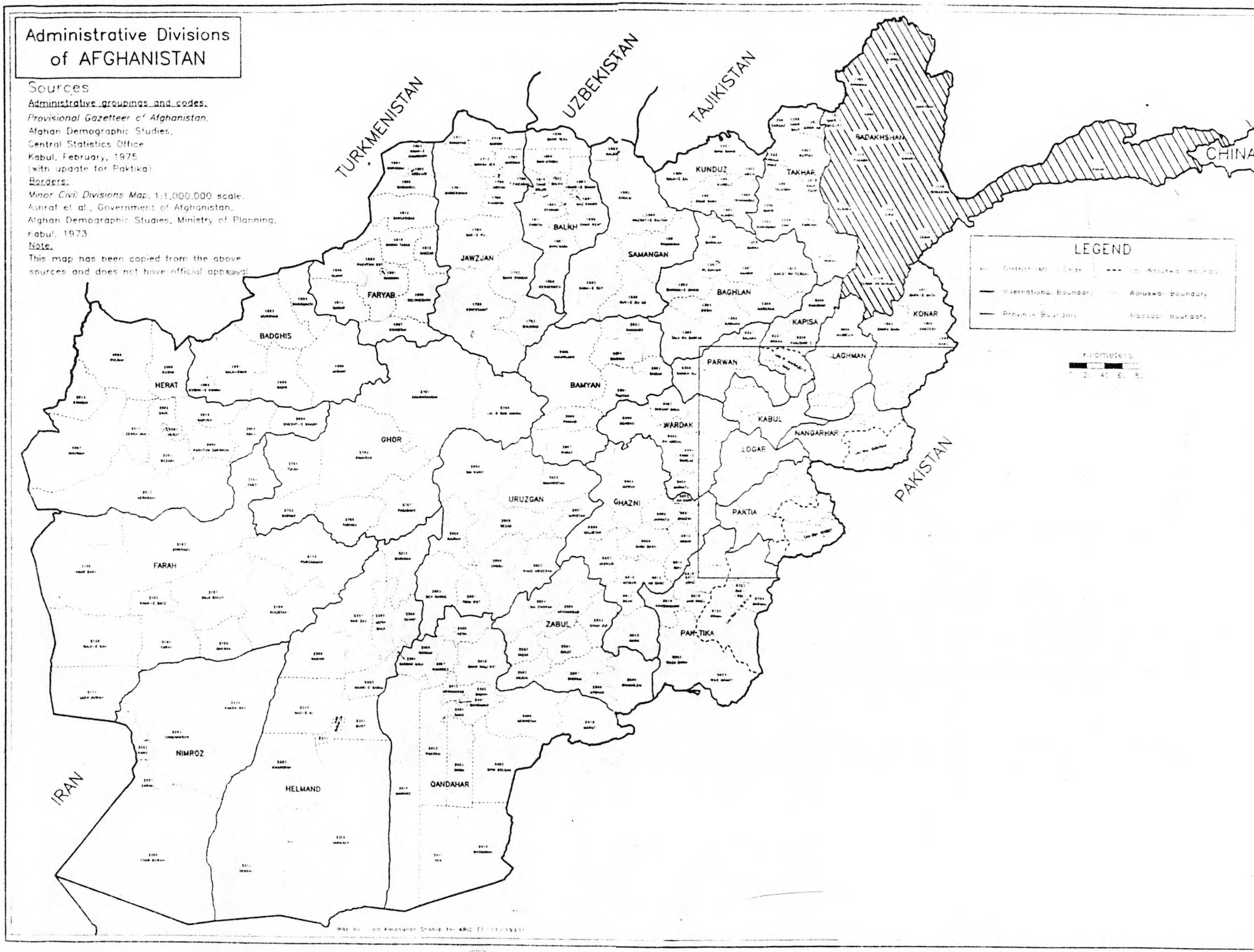
5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Province of Badakhshan has always been one of the poorest parts of a poor country. But, during the last years it has become increasingly poor increasingly rapidly. There are enough indicators available to suggest that 1995 will be one of the hardest years in the Province for a long time. There may or may not be a famine, but their will be widespread hardship, which will be compounded by natural disasters. This report argues that there is a chance to alleviate this situation. There are organisations available who have the capacity to act, but the intervention must be focused on development rather than relief and the money made available for it to happen. In the long term it will be cheaper to invest money in a solution rather that attempting an ongoing and increasingly costly cure. Such action must be well planned and coordinated with the Provincial & National Government.

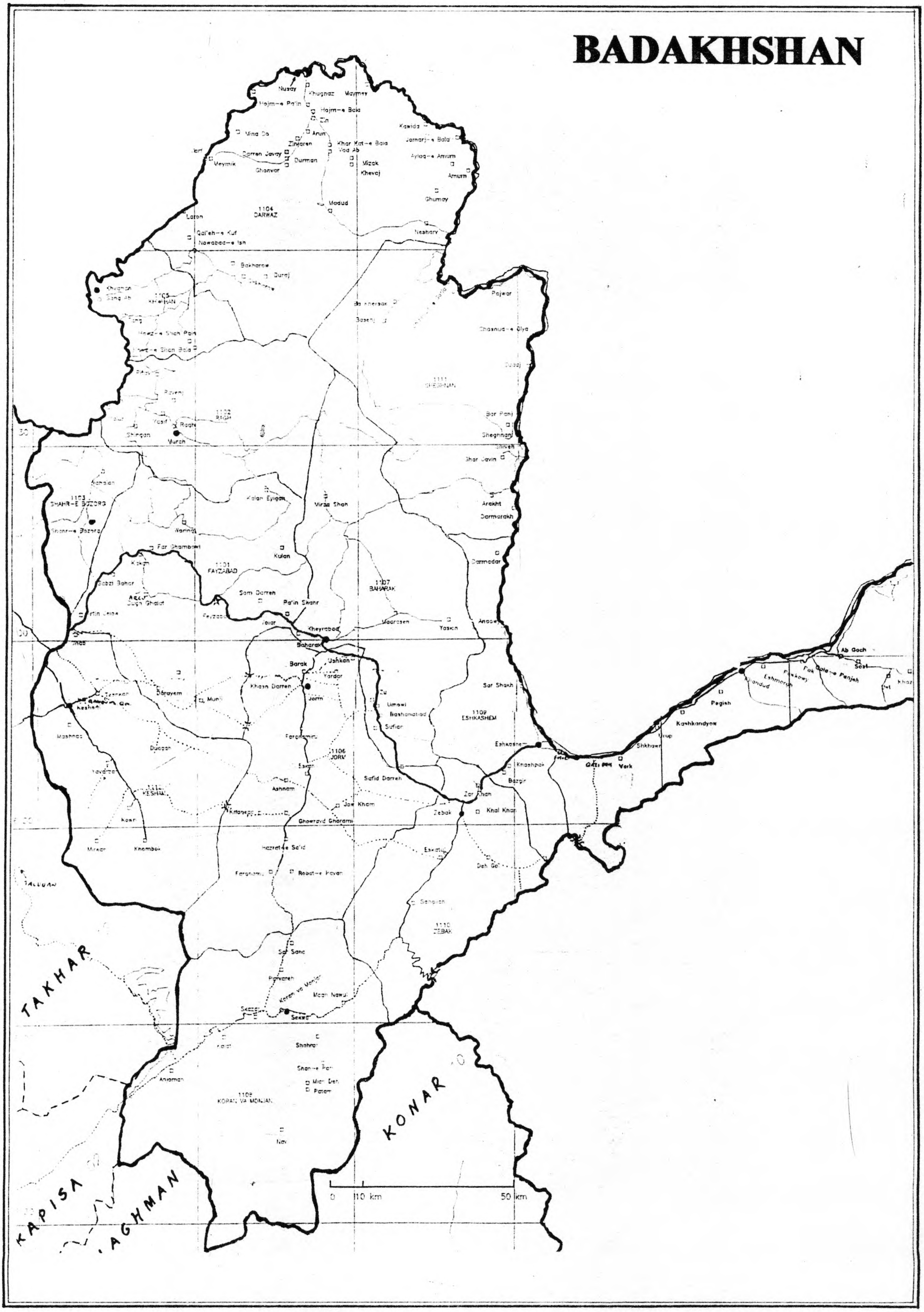
List of annexes:

1. Map of Badakhshan.
2. Sample data from Yaftal Payeen, Fayazabad District.

ANNEX: 1


Administrative Divisions of AFGHANISTAN
Sources
Administrative groupings and codes:
Provisional Gazetteer of Afghanistan,
Afghan Demographic Studies,
Central Statistics Office
Kabul, February, 1975
(with update for Paktika)
Borders:
Minor Civil Divisions Map, 1:1,000,000 scale,
Ashraf et al., Government of Afghanistan,
Afghan Demographic Studies, Ministry of Planning,
Kabul, 1973
Note:
This map has been copied from the above sources and does not have official approval
TURKMENISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
CHINA
PAKISTAN
IRAN
BADAKHSHAN
KUNDUZ
TAKHAR
BALKH
JAWZJAN
FARYAB
SAMANGAN
BAGHLAN
KAPISA
KONAR
LAGHMAN
PARWAN
KABUL
NANGARHAR
LOGAR
WARDAK
BAMYAN
BADGHIS
HERAT
GHOR
URUZGAN
GHAZNI
PAKTIA
PAKTIKA
ZABUL
FARAH
NIMROZ
HELMAND
QANDAHAR
LEGEND
International Boundary
Province Boundary
Woluswali Boundary
Alaqadari Boundary
Kilometers

ANNEX: 1



BADAKHSHAN
1104
DARWAZ
1105
KHWAHAN
1111
SHEGHNAN
1102
RAGH
1103
SHAHR-E BOZORG
1101
FAYZABAD
1107
BAHARAK
1109
ESHKASHEM
1106
JORM
1110
ZEBAK
1108
KORAN VA MONJAN
Fayzabad
Baharak
Kheyrabad
Jorm
Zebak
Eshkashem
Shahr-e Bozorg
Khwahan
Ab Gach
Darya-e Panjeh
TAKHAR
KONAR
KAPISA
LAGHMAN
0
10 km
50 km

ANNEX 2

**DATE FROM YAFTAL PAYEEN,
FAIZABAD DISTRICT, BADAKHSHAN**

Place	No. of Household	Immigrated	Wheat/seer	cultivation/yield
Dasterchan	30	12	8000 Afs.	1 Seer/1 Seer
Qatarbig	50	15	8000 Afs.	1/1
Samcho	30	13	7800-8000	1/1
Wakhideh	60	20	8000 Afs.	1/1
Yonus Pandara	11	2	6500 Afs.	1/2
Shaheen	40	8	6000 Afs.	1/2
Wajikal	30	10	6000 Afs.	1/2
Shkarlab	80	20	6000 Afs.	1/2
Dehbala	60	16	6000 Afs.	1/2
Dehpayan	40	12	6000 Afs.	1/2
Dehgholac	15	8	6000 Afs.	1/2
Hazarseb	42	3	6000 Afs.	1/2
Sokhtakoh	27	7	6000 Afs.	1/2
Sokhtakoh Bala	25	6	6000 Afs.	1/2
Sarinang	39	15	6000 Afs.	1/2
Naland	45	6	6000 Afs.	1/2
Nashreen	70	25	6000 Afs.	1/2
Waring	220	40	6000 Afs.	1/2
Gazanak	100	48	6500 Afs.	1/2

→ Badakhshan file

NORWEGIAN AFGHANISTAN COMMITTEE

BADAKHSHAN PROGRAM

BACKGROUND & SITUATION REPORT
BADAKHSHAN PROVINCE
AUTUMN/WINTER 1994/5

SUBMITTED BY: JOHN HAYWARD

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 01/04/95

STATUS: FINAL

LAST REVISION: 31/03/95

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to present information and highlight to appalling situation in Badakhshan. The report is subjective and data has not be gathered though formal survey.

Badakhshan is remote, with an extreme climate and topography. The Province is extremely poor.

The Province's economy is based on subsistence agriculture.

The situation in the province has been exacerbated by three years of poor harvests on top of fourteen years of war. It is becoming more desperate year by year.

There is a functioning Provincial Government.

Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) has worked in the Province for three years implementing a variety of projects.

The security situation in the Province is good.

Food security is poor. Food production is falling, food transportation is difficult.

The level of poverty are increasing. The gap between rich and poor is widening.

There is a limited provision of public services.

Logistics are difficult and a constraint on operations. They must be considered in the planning process.

There will be immense hardship in spring / summer 1995. There may be pre-famine or famine conditions in certain areas.

Any external intervention should focus on prevention rather than cure: long term development rather than relief.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Serious attention is paid to the prevailing situation in Badakhshan. Indicators suggest that there is an incipient humanitarian and social disaster in the making.

2. A mission of relevant & interested international and national agencies & institutions visit the area to gather further information and report.

3. Any intervention must be well planned and coordinated.

4. Relief and emergency aid should be minimized, because it is not the most efficient use of resources.

5. If emergency relief is to be offered, it is deployed in such a way that it re-enforces the mechanisms that the population has developed to cope with disasters and is targeted towards the most needy.

6. Long term, sustainable and appropriate development is preferable to emergency aid, since it will mitigate future disasters.

7. The focus of such an intervention is on securing food supply, though increasing agricultural production and improving communications.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1. OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

The province of Badakhshan is remote and seldom visited. Very little accurate information exists or is available. During three years of work in the province, the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) has found this to be a major constraint. At the same time NAC has received a constant stream of requests for information. Over the last four years the expatriate Program Director has travelled extensively over the province by foot and vehicle and visited most of the villages of the province. On his last trip he was deeply disturbed by the conditions that he encountered.

This report has two purposes. The first is to make available a small part of the information that NAC has collected over the years. The second is to highlight and draw attention to the appalling situation existing in Badakhshan in the autumn/ winter of 1994/95 and to the inevitable consequences, which must surely follow in 1995. Over the last three years, every year in the spring there have been reports of food shortages, earth quakes and floods in Badakhshan reaching Pakistan. However, it has been impossible to react quickly to these problems. It is hoped that this report will provide advanced warning.

2.2. METHODOLOGY

This report is subjective. Data has been gathered incrementally and not collected through formal survey. Project and emergency survey teams have been to all districts of the province this year by NAC. NAC has implemented over fifty projects in a broad arc stretching from Keshem to Zeebak, each project has allowed NAC staff to gain a penetrating insight into the counterpart communities, their problems and their way of life. Most of NAC's staff in Badakhshan are from the province and are able to corroborate data. Finally, the Program Director has taken extensive notes during his travels, covering all but four of the districts of the province.

3.0. BACKGROUND

3.1. BADAKHSHAN PROVINCE

Badakhshan is the most north easterly province of Afghanistan; it borders Pakistan, Tajikistan and China and covers 47,000 sq km. Much of the province is covered by hills and high mountains (up to 7000m) and dissected by deep valleys. Fertile land is scarce. Irrigable land is at a premium. The province is divided into two distinct ecological zones: the **Kokcha Hills** and the **North-Eastern Alps & Pamirs**.

The population of the province is estimated to be between 500,000 to 600,000 persons. The bulk of the population is concentrated along the river valleys of the central and western areas of the province. The province is a mix of ethnic ethnic groups. There are several major ethnic groups and sixteen different languages are spoken within the province. The majority of the people are mountain Tajiks, descendants of the Saka tribes and the later Soghimil kingdom. There are also a sizeable minorities of Uzbek people and smaller numbers of Turkmen, Pashtuns, Moghols & Kirghiz. In the past, persecuted groups from Central Asia have sort refuge in Badakhshan (and other parts of northern Afghanistan). The constituent elements of the varying ethnic groups can also be identified according to the date of their arrival. The bulk of the population of the province are Sunni Muslims of the Hanifi school. There are some Jaffari Shia and in the eastern part of the province the people are Ismaeli. The Ismaeli people have developed a distinct culture due to their religious beliefs and isolation. Every summer and large number of Pushtun nomads move to the rich alpine pastures of Dasht-i-Itsch and Dasht-i- Shiva to pasture their animals. Pashtun men also travel from Paktia and Paktika to capture hawks for sale to places as far away as the Persian Gulf.

Previously, province consisted of thirteen districts and sub-districts. In the last year a further eight districts have been created, several other areas have submitted requests and all the sub-districts have been promoted to the grade of full district. The Provincial Government sits in Faizabad. The departments and district administrations function. Their effectiveness is limited by lack of funds and trained staff.

The politics of the province are dominated by Jamiat-i-Islami (the Party's leader Professor Rabbini is from Yaftal, Badakhshan) and Shura-e-Nazar. Hezb-i-Islami is also represented but its influence has diminished over the past years. Setem-i-Milli, one of the leftist parties, was strong in the central areas of the province during the war but subsequently has been driven under ground. However, there remain a number of sympathizers and it still controls Kwakhan Centre.

The provincial economy is based around subsistence agriculture. There is small scale light industry in the major bazaars. Lapis lazuli, gem stones (rubies, garnet, emeralds & others) & gold are found and extracted by the local people. The main exports are opium, gemstones, dried fruit & nuts, liquorice root (shireen boya) & other medicinal plants, animal skins and animals for meat. The main imports are foodstuffs, consumer goods and fuel oil.

The main agricultural crop is wheat. Rice, oilseed crops, potatoes and maize are also grown. Most types of fruit tree grow, including mulberry, apricot, peach, apple, pear, grapes, walnut, pistachio and almond. Water is the key factor of production. Irrigated land is very limited and concentrated in a few locations. Little mechanical farm power or imported inputs are used. Animals are kept but the shortage of winter fodder restricts the local people from fully utilising the extensive alpine pastures.

Badakhshan has always been a poor, underdeveloped and marginalised area. It has traditionally been a net food importer and has suffered from famines periodically: the last major famine was in 1973.

"When executing the survey, the FINNCONSULT team came to the conclusion, that in the case of Badakhshan, an emergency situation exists, which calls for immediate action rather than normal planning procedure."

> Socio-Economic Survey of Badakhshan (1976): FINNCONSULT for UNDP on behalf of the Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Planning.

The situation has not improved. Badakhshan is part of a country that has been in a state of war for seventeen years. Little development of any consequence has occurred in this time. Instead, there has been massive, sustained physical, economic and social destruction & dislocation.

"Badakhshan had the highest rates of malnourished children with 33% severely malnourished and 26% moderately malnourished. Three of the districts had less than 35% normally nourished."

> Nutrition Survey Report on Badakhshan, Jowzjan & Faryiab (1990): AFGHANAID.

(Please note that **during the course of this survey the five poorest, most remote and food deficient areas were not visited: Darwaz, Shegnan, Eshkashem, Zeebak and Wakhan**)

The province is a net opium exporter. Opium was introduced from China several hundred years ago. Most opium is produced in two areas in the centre of the province: Khosh and Darayem. Smaller quantities are produced in several other locations. There is no evidence to suggest that there are any functioning refining facilities. In the east of the province: Shegnan, Zeebak, Eshkashem and Wakhan, the Ismaeli and Kirghiz people are heavy

opium users and there are very high levels of addiction. However, they grow very little. Opium was grown in Badakhshan before the war, mainly in the Khosh valley. However, its growth was prohibited by the Government and it was not until the unrest in the late 1970's and the subsequent breakdown of Government authority over the rural areas, that opium was more widely grown.

2.2. **PROGRAM**

The NAC Badakhshan Program was established in in the summer of 1992. It developed from a legacy of support to the Mujehadeen Fronts of Badakhshan during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Under the auspices of the Program, activities have been carried out in the sectors of rural engineering/ reconstruction (education, irrigation, communication and sanitation infrastructure), preventative health, agriculture and emergency. Thirty two schools have been reconstructed or repaired, six sections of road, five sets of irrigation structures and various emergency distributions. The Program has developed an administrative and implementation capacity based in the province, coupled with a substantial fund of knowledge & information and a good local working reputation.

The philosophy underpinning the work of the Program in its first years, maintained that before any really effective long term development work could be done the Program had to establish a reputation or "name". This "name" would be vital the success of the organisation. It had to be earned through implementing high quality projects quickly & efficiently and honouring any commitments that had been made to local partners. This "name" was to underpin the relationship between the people and Government of Badakhshan, allowing the relationship to be based on mutual respect and trust, rather than suspicion, misunderstanding and exploitation. It is believed that without such a basis of trust and reciprocal respect, no long term work can be successful.

3.0. SITUATION REPORT: WINTER 1995

3.1. SECURITY

Regional: Central Asia and Afghanistan are currently unstable and have the potential of becoming more so. Regional security issues directly impact on the security situation within the province. The effects of the continuing civil war in Tajikistan and the presence of Tajik opposition groups in Badakhshan, have resulted in artillery and rocket bombardments of border villages and the bombing of Baharak bazaar (20/12/94 & 27/12/94).
During 1994 there has been an active military front in the nearby provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan. This has closed the Kunduz to Baghlan road and the Kunduz to Khulm road. Directly effecting & disrupting communications to the province.

Provincial: Badakhshan has been quiet and stable. Mujahiddeen groups have been disbanded and integrated into a regular military structure. The political parties (Jamiat-i-Islami and Hezb-i-Islami) have come to a working understanding. Serious attempts are being made to collect and register fire arms. The roads are safe and there are only a limited number of Government check points. There remain problems around Kwakhan Centre, where Commander Ustad of Setem-i-Milli and the Government are in conflict.

3.2. FOOD SECURITY

Definition: In this context, the following definition is applied to the term food security: "access to a sufficient quantities of food to ensure a balanced, healthy diet which contains sufficient calorific value to maintain normal body weight." It is argued that there are four main factors that are interlinked and effect food security: the production of food, the import and provision of food through the market or bazaar systems, access (both physical and economic) of the population to food and food storage.

Production: The harvest yields of the irrigated land throughout Badakhshan were reasonable. The wheat harvest was good, rice and other crops yielded normally. However, as mentioned above, irrigated land is a scarce resource and most families are dependent on dry land. The dry (lalami) land harvest was very poor for the third successive year. In every district and area yields were well below normal. Normal returns on seed are in the ratio of between 1 to 3 and 1 to 10. In no case was any evidence found in any district of the dry land yields exceeding 1 to 2. In many cases the crops did not return seed.

There seem to be a number of reasons for this. Rainfall has been limited, there are problems with plant disease especially rust and powdery mildew. It also appears that soil fertility is declining. This is causing farmers to crop lalami land more intensively. Lalami land is now often cropped every other rather than every third year. The root cause for this decline seems to traceable to the extensive de-forestation that occurred in the early years of the war and subsequent topsoil erosion.
Unusually late frosts and snow occurred in Badakhshan between 1st and 5th April 1994. This destroyed the fruit blossoms in all areas apart from Darwaz and the lower parts of Keshem and Shar-i-Buzurg. The mulberry and other fruit harvest was total failure. Fruit is not only a cash crop. In Darwaz, Shegnan and Teshkan, where any form of agricultural land is in short supply, mulberries are dried and ground into flour. This flour is used to make talkhan: which is eaten as a replacement for bread.

Import: Badakhshan traditionally makes up its food deficit by importing wheat from other provinces such as Takhar, Kunduz and the rest of northern Afghanistan. The harvest in the north was reasonable. However, military action around Kunduz in the summer disrupted the harvesting process. In addition, the transportation routes from the north to north-eastern Afghanistan were closed during the whole year due to military action. No wheat has been imported from Mazar-i-Sharif. The main highway from Taloqan to Faizabad is in bad condition. The condition of this road continues to deteriorate, increasing transport prices. Another source of wheat supply in the past has been a wheat subsidy from the Soviet government to the Communist held areas of Badakhshan. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent civil war in Tajikistan, this subsidy is no longer provided. Indeed the food security situation in Tajikistan, especially in the Gorno-Badakhshan / Pamir area is now worse than Badakhshan. The effect has been that little food has been imported. That food that has been imported has been very expensive.

Availability of food: Small quantities of food were available in all of the bazaars visited. Wheat prices are approximately double what they were last year. (Much of this increase is due to inflation). Other items: especially tea, edible fat and sugar have increased by up to four times. However, the prices of food stuffs do not reflect the need, since most families are so poor that they are unable to purchase more than very limited supplies of food from the bazaar and hence demand is low. Thus the relationship between supply and demand has been distorted by poverty.

Access to food: The non-agricultural sector of the Badakhshi economy is relatively stable. There has been no major expansion of economic activity which allows people to generate extra cash with which to purchase food. Internal transportation and communication links within the province remain poor and vulnerable . This means that the physical and economic access of the population to food stocks in the bazaar remain restricted.